(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the matter was discussed with the U.K. Defence Secretary Geof Hoon during his recent visit to New Delhi and if so, what was his reaction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Pakistan has established an elaborate infrastructure for the recruitment, indoctrination and training of terrorists on its territories and territories under its control, to support its policy of sponsoring cross-border terrorism in J&K and other parts of India.

Despite the commitment from President Musharraf to end cross border infiltration on a permanent basis, not to allow the territory of Pakistan to be used for terrorism anywhere in the world or any organisation in Pakistan to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir, there is no evidence of any firm attempts being made to dismantle the infrastructure that supports and feeds cross-border terrorism including launching stations, communication centres and training camps.

(c) Government have been appropriately and effectively bringing to the attention of the international community facts pertaining to Pakistan's continued sponsorship of cross-border terrorism in India.

Talks with U.S. Defence Secretary regarding infiltration

1680. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the talks with the visiting U.S. Defence Secretary in New Delhi, the presenece of an estimated 3000 Pak-backed terrorists within the Kashmir Valley and an equal number of them ready to infiltrate across the Line of Control, was taken note of, in the context of the Indian proposal for joint Indo-Pakistan vigil along the LoC and the borders in Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the decision taken during the talks in the light thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to prevent any strike by these terrorist groups during and on the eve of elections to Jammu and Kashmir Assembly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Government shared with U.S. Secretary of Defence its information and assessment on all parameters of cross-border terrorism, including the terrorist camps and infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the strength of these camps and trends in infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir. Government reiterated its proposal for joint patrolling with Pakistan along the Line of Control and International Border.

(b) No decisions were taken during the talks.

(c) Steps taken by the Govenment to check infiltration and fight terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, as also to create a peaceful atmosphere for free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir, will continue to be in place. Government has also conveyed to the international community its determination to prevent Pakistan from disrupting the election process through violence and intimidation.

Foreign Minister's visit to Sri Lanka

1681. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has recently paid a visit to Sri Lanka and held discussions with his counterpart on several important issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have agreed to extend any help to Sri Lanka in various fields; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and to what extent relations between both the countries have been strengthened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. Minister of External Affairs (EAM) visited Sri Lanka on July 11-12, 2002. He held wide ranging discussions with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka. He also called on the President of Sri Lanka.

(b) During discussions, EAM reiterated India's commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and to the restoration of a lasting peace through a peaceful, negotiated settlement meeting the